

Wakefield College Corporation

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 October 2016

1 Present: Robert Allcock, Matthew Butler, David Caddies, Paul Campbell (Chair), Emma Elvin, Andrew McConnell, Debbie Moss, Jane Walton, Andrew Watts, Sam Wright

Clerk to the Corporation

In attendance: Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal Quality and Performance, Director of Estates

Apologies: Andy Wallhead

Paul Campbell welcomed new Governor Emma Elvin to the meeting. Introductions were made.

Resolved

That the resignations of Jason Malloy and Ruth Pickford be noted.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 Governors noted that College officers, Staff and Student Governors on the confidential minutes of the Board on the Proposed Principalship Restructure. The Chair commented that these individuals would be requested to withdraw from the meeting for this item.

Resolved

That the Staff and Student Governors withdraw from the meeting for the consideration of the Proposed Principalship Restructure in accordance with clauses 5(d) and 9(b) respectively of Instrument 14.

3 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 12 July 2016

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2016 be approved.

4 Matters Arising

4.1 On minute 4.1 (Matters Arising – Date of Next Scheduled Meeting), it was noted that the Core Strategic Item on English and Maths had been deferred and would need to be incorporated into the schedule of core strategic items.

4.2 On minute 4.3 (Matters Arising – Strategic Planning), it was noted that the results of the staff survey would be outlined as part of the Human Resources Annual Report to be provided at the next Board meeting on 13 December.

- 4.3 On minute 9 (Update on the Area Review), Governors noted that the final report which was meant to have been published in July, had still not materialised, although this was expected imminently.

5 Minutes of the Committees of the Board:

(i) Remuneration Committee, 12 July 2016

- 5.1 Governors were reminded that specific queries should be referred to the Chair of the Remuneration Committee (David Caddies) outside of the meeting.

Resolved

That the minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 12 July 2016 be noted.

6 Core Strategic Item – Property Development

- (i) Property Development Update**
- (ii) Property Strategy**
- (iii) Archive of Deeds**

This item is confidential as it is commercially sensitive.

The Director of Estates withdrew from the meeting at the end of the agenda item.

7 Student Update

- 7.1 Robert Allcock and Matthew Butler outlined the following points:

- (i) that they were looking to conduct a survey of students to find out what they wanted from their College;
- (ii) learning walks would be undertaken so that the Student Governors could gain a knowledge of the wider College. To that end, Matthew Butler had attended the Governor learning walk earlier in the day in the area of Sports, Public Services and Leisure and Tourism;
- (iii) that an effort would be made to spread student events to different venues, such as the Lightwaves Sports Hall.

- 7.2 It was suggested that, as the College was conducting its own student survey in December, it would make sense for the two surveys to be combined. It was noted that these surveys would be accessible to students from outside of the College, where previously this had not been the case.

8 Performance Dashboard and Principal's Annual Report 2015/16

- 8.1 The Principal reported the following issues in relation to the year-end position for 2015/16 of the Performance Dashboard:

- (i) the three areas RAG-rated red;
 - attendance which was 84% in 2015/16;

- 24+ loans, where the College only secured 55% of its loan facility. It was clear that potential students were reticent to take out loans, and although a loan might be secured, students often ended up self-funding their study, either personally or through their employer. The College continues to review its adult offering;
 - Staff absence rate, which remained above sector benchmark.
- (ii) destination data was incomplete. The College had recruited a temporary team to collect destination data by November.

8.2 In respect of the Annual Report, the Principal reported the following:

- (i) the College had emerged from the area review process recognised as being able to stand alone;
- (ii) construction of the Advanced Skills and Innovation Centre (ASIC) was on track;
- (iii) validation of the College's higher education provision had been secured through agreements with Leeds Beckett University and the University of Hull;
- (iv) the College remained in strong financial health;
- (v) the College had seen a decline in success rates across all areas;
- (vi) that an inspection was expected in 2017 and preparation was underway;
- (vii) a restructure of the senior leadership team had been undertaken to create better focus on key areas.

8.3 Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) whether good practice in English and Maths was shared between colleges;
- (ii) whether the College should expand its Apprenticeship Shop to cover all College courses, to give it a strong presence in the centre of Wakefield;
- (iii) that apprenticeship figures were up and that the shop had been successful. The College had also been engaging widely with employers regarding apprenticeships, including breakfast events;
- (iv) whether staff absence was stress related. It was noted that staffing issues were discussed regularly between the Principal, Deputy Principal and Director Human Resources and Organisational Development;
- (v) that the restructure of the Senior Leadership Team would impact on the wider staff due to changes in line management responsibilities.

9 Preliminary Report on Student Performance

9.1 The Assistant Principal Quality and Performance gave a presentation outlining the following points

- (i) the College context: that the College had a higher proportion of students living in areas of highest deprivation and a lower proportion of students living in areas of least deprivation, compared with both the general and student populations;
- (ii) the impacts of deprivation;
- (iii) the main reason for students withdrawing from courses, which included employment or external apprenticeship, health and personal reasons, and a move to another provider;
- (iv) other factors impacting on retention, which included:
 - a new rule in achievement rate methodology which affected retention;

- revised classifications for withdrawal versus retention;
- (v) headline achievement rates which were down across all areas:

16-18	2015/16 (%)	Variance with 2014/15
Level 1	74	-2%-points
Level 2	70	-2%-points
Level 3	78	-3%-points
19+		
Level 1	84	-4%-points
Level 2	75	-1%-points
Level 3	78	-5%-points

- (vi) achievement rates were negatively impacted by:
- the College's approach to inclusion;
 - changes to Functional Skills exams, which are now more demanding;
 - GCSE Condition of Funding;
 - under-performance in AS Levels;
- (vii) a like-for-like comparison of 16-18 with 2014/15 which showed: improvements at L1 and L2 performance when alternative curriculum and Functional Skills were excluded;
- (viii) factors impacting on 19+ performance:
- L1 – nature of curriculum impacts retention and pass rate
 - L2 – pass rate improved but retention declined
 - L3 – pass rate at national but retention declined
- (ix) GCSE pass rates A*-C:
- English: 16-18: 15%; 19+: 45%
 - Maths: 16-18: 14%; 19+: 36%
- (x) factors impacting GCSE English and Maths 16-18 performance:
- impact of Condition of Funding
 - a poor national context
 - large increases in numbers of students taking GCSE English and Maths
- (xi) significant declines in Functional Skills pass rates for Levels 1 and 2 in both English and Maths for both 16-18 and 19+;
- (xii) key issues to address include:
- GCSE Maths and English A*-C pass rates
 - Functional Skills achievement rates
 - AS pass rates
- (xiii) actions being undertaken to address under performance:
- Ofsted consultant working with curriculum areas to identify key issues;
 - senior management re-structure to better meet needs;
 - creation of Director of English and Maths.

9.2 Governors considered the following issues:

- how the College's GCSE English and Maths pass results compared with other colleges. It was noted that national data was not yet available;
- whether the poor results impacted on progression. It was noted that although this data had not yet been analysed, students were able to progress by securing an A*-C in either English or Maths (i.e. without requiring both);
- that LLDD students undertaking GCSE English or Maths would find it very difficult to access mainstream classes;
- that the College needed to be effective in communicating the importance of English and Maths to its students;

- (v) that the College needed to fully understand the reasons for its results so as to develop a coherent improvement plan and narrative for Ofsted;
- (vi) whether the College was taking any action to retain those students leaving to attend other institutions. It was noted that this analysis had not yet been undertaken, but was something that the College could usefully do.

10 Finance Report, Incorporating:

- **Provisional Outturn 2015/16**
- **Debts Written Off During 2015/16**
- **Report on Waivers from Financial Regulations 2015/16**
- **Treasury Management Policy**

10.1 The Deputy Principal reported the following:

- (i) Provisional Outturn 2015/16:
 - that the operating position of the College had improved by £166k since last reported in July, due mainly to firmer figures now being available;
 - the new financial standard reports more financial items under the Statement of Comprehensive Income (SOCl) with less transactions being handled through reserve movements. The improved operating position was negated by a loss on the demolition of C-Block to make way for the ASIC. The largest (adverse) movement by far was the deficit on pension scheme obligations (£6.3m);
 - the external auditors had been in College and not raised any issues and so the outturn was not expected to change;
- (ii) Debts Written Off in 2015/16;
 - the largest area for debt write off was for tuition fees;
- (iii) Waivers from Financial Regulations 2015/16:
 - these usually related to continuity of equipment or due to a limited number of suppliers, where three quotes could not be secured;
 - the costs relating to an advertising firm were gross figures (overstated), with only 10% actually being retained by the firm.

10.2 Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) that pension charge adjustments had shown large swings in recent years and were based on actuarial assumptions, which questioned their validity;
- (ii) details of a debt related to staff development. This debt was thought to arise from a member of staff that had completed a PGCE and subsequently left the College without repaying the debt.

10.3 Governors congratulated the College on achieving a strong outturn for 2015/16.

Resolved

That the Treasury Management Policy be approved.

11 Appraisal of Governors and the Chair of Governors in 2016

11.1 The Chair of Governors reported that the appraisals of four Governors were still outstanding and thus the report would be deferred until these had been completed.

12 Chair's Action

- 12.1 The Chair of Governors reported that following the resignation of Jason Malloy as a Governor during the summer he had undertaken a Chair's Action to appoint a new Chair of the Audit Committee for the period up until its next meeting.

Resolved

That the appointment of Ian Parsons as Chair of the Audit Committee be noted.

13 Briefing Papers:

13.1 Governor Attendance 2015/16

Resolved

That the report on Governor attendance in 2015/16 (87%) be noted.

13.2 Annual Report on Governor Activity 2015/16

Resolved

That the Annual Report on Governor Activity 2015/16 be noted.

13.3 Use of the Seal of the Corporation

Resolved

That it be noted that the Seal of the Corporation was not used in the period 6 July 2016 and 11 October 2016.

14 Feedback from Governors Attending External or Development Sessions

- 14.1 The following external or development events were reported:

- (i) Matthew Butler, David Caddies and Andrew McConnell attended a Governor learning walk on Sport, Public Services and Leisure and Tourism prior to the Board meeting. Feedback included:
- that Governor learning walks presented an ideal opportunity to see College facilities, meet staff and students, and learn about a particular curriculum area. It also permitted triangulation of what Governors were being told at meetings;
 - the lessons visited had been very interesting as were the lecturers' abilities at engaging students;
 - that the differing abilities of students within each classroom must present challenges for teaching staff;
 - that lecturers had indicated varying degrees of difficulties in including Maths into their lessons.
- (ii) Paul Campbell indicated he had attended a number of events including:
- a meeting of Yorkshire and Humber Chairs and Principals to meet David Hughes, the new Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges;
 - the Topping Out Ceremony for the ASIC.

- (ii) David Caddies indicated that he had attended the College's Business School Awards evening to make an address and present awards.

15 Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risk

15.1 It was noted that the key risks facing the College included:

- (i) the unexpected loss of two Governors;
- (ii) securing funding for the refurbishment of the Archive of Deeds Building;
- (iii) the impact on staff of the restructure of the senior leadership team;
- (iv) the decline in results in 2016 with an Ofsted inspection pending.

Staff and Student Governors and College officers withdrew from the meeting at the end of this item.

16 Confidential Minutes of the Meeting Held on 12 July 2016

16.1 The Principal provided an update on the restructure of the leadership team. Key points made included:

- (i) the titles of tier two posts had changed to Executive Directors;
- (ii) the intentions of some of the current Senior Leadership Team;
- (iii) the timetable for recruitment of the Executive Director Finance and Resources and Executive Director Apprenticeships, Commercial and External Relations and the involvement of the Chair and Vice Chair of Governor in this recruitment process.

Resolved

That the Confidential minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2016 be approved.

17 Date of Next Scheduled Meeting – Tuesday 13 December 2016

Signed Date.....

Proposed Future Core Strategic Items

Item	Date
13 December 2016	Self Assessment Report 2015/16
7 February 2017	Pay and Benefits Strategy
28 March 2017	Employer Engagement Strategy
23 May 2017	tbc
11 July 2017	Budget / Financial Plan / Strategic Plan / Risk Management

Also:

- 1 February 2017 (Governors' Workshop) – Apprenticeships
- tbc – English and Maths Strategy (incl. Improving Attendance)